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ABSTRACT

This document was written by teachers and consultants who participated in a 3-year elementary school portfolio assessment project involving 13 school districts in Macomb County (Michigan). The goal of the Macomb Portfolio Project, initiated in 1990, was to develop portfolio assessment models through collaboration using the teacher-as-researcher approach. During its first year, 56 teachers volunteered to be part of this project. This booklet summarizes learning from the project's classrooms, and serves as a guide to teachers considering or just beginning to use portfolios. Topics considered include: (1) understanding portfolio assessment; (2) key portfolio characteristics; (3) portfolio assessment benefits; (4) getting started; (5) beginning a building assessment plan; (6) documenting learner growth; (7) ways to document learner growth in portfolios; (8) sample captioning forms; (9) reflecting on portfolios; (10) "The June Dilemma," what to do with portfolios; and (11) questions teachers ask about portfolios. A glossary of terms is included, as well as a 34-item annotated bibliography. (SLD)

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Abstract

Sit Beside Me... was written by teachers and consultants who participated in a three year elementary portfolio assessment project involving thirteen districts in Macomb County, Michigan. The goal of the project was to collaboratively develop portfolio assessment models using the teacher as researcher approach. This attractive and inviting 32 page, 8 1/2" x 11" booklet is a summary of learnings from the project's classrooms and serves as a guide to teachers considering or just beginning to use portfolios. Some of the topics treated include "Questions Teachers Ask About Portfolios" (and answers), "Documenting Learner Growth," and "Getting Started." The booklet's thirteen sections include a glossary and annotated bibliography as well.

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MACOMB INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

44001 Garfield Road
Clinton Township, Michigan 48038-1100

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We're the Macomb Intermediate School District.

We exist to provide our clients quality service, high caliber support and cutting edge leadership.

Our primary clients are the 21 school districts of Macomb County. They are our most important customers—indeed, our reason for being.

Within these districts we focus our efforts on school staff. We work to increase their skills and capabilities so their students can experience more effective educational programs.

We also serve the handicapped. In fact, we are committed to working directly with handicapped youngsters who reside in Macomb County's school districts.

And we are involved with the educational community across the country. Many of our staff members are leaders in state and national programs. Many are working with colleges and universities. Still others are exchanging information with their professional colleagues. All these activities have a single purpose: to identify and develop techniques and programs which improve learning opportunities in Macomb County.

Acknowledgements

This booklet is the result of contributions from many people. Different portions of this booklet were written by the following people: Marie Azar, Mary Cass, Jim Cipielewski, Rosalie Jordan, Sue Kraetke and Kathy Markel. They have been generous with their time and very supportive of this project.

Many thanks are owed to the Communication Department of the Macomb ISD for giving shape to our raw ideas and producing a readable and useful publication. Special thanks to department members Don Masserang and Oleh Godzak.

I am indebted to the following individuals who shared their knowledge and provided us with valuable guidance: Dorsey Hammond, Oakland University; Jack Pikulski, University of Delaware; Robert Tierney, Ohio State University; Shelia Valencia, University of Washington; and Linda Vavrus, Stanford University.

Finally, I am grateful for the initial word processing done by Marilyn Bracy, my secretary.

Bob Williams
Macomb Project Director
February 1993

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Participating Districts Macomb Portfolio Project 1990–93

Anchor Bay	L'Anse Creuse
Armada	Lake Shore
Chippewa Valley	Macomb ISD
Clintondale	Roseville
East Detroit	South Lake
Fitzgerald	Warren Consolidated
Fraser	Warren Woods

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Preface

April 5, 1993

In the last two decades we have seen a steady and dramatic shift in school curriculum.

We have moved away from isolated skills instruction, minimal performance objectives, and an overdependence on objective referenced tests. Today's curriculum reflects an effort to maximize learning and growth in our students; to focus on process as well as the final product and to help students become more aware and responsible for their own learning.

For example, in the reading curriculum we are now talking about reading as a dynamic process of constructing meaning, developing strategic readers and developing within our students a metacognitive awareness of their own learning. In writing we talk about process writing, and we understand that the ability to revise and refine is at the heart of developing good writers. In mathematics we talk about problem solving and applying mathematics to real life situations.

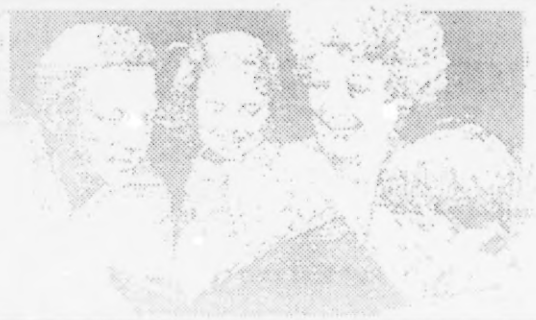
Across the curriculum there is a focus on authentic learning, process learning, and strategic and motivated learners. Educators see learning not so much as a point or destination but as a journey.

The Macomb Intermediate School District Portfolio Project under the leadership of Bob Williams is a natural outgrowth of this emerging curriculum focus. Begun in 1990, the Project has addressed the necessity for a new perspective in assessing what students learn, but more importantly, how they learn in a comprehensive and ongoing manner. In addition, the Project stressed the important issue of students playing an active role with their teacher in the assessment of their learning.

Outstanding Macomb classroom teachers, school principals, and curriculum specialists have worked together as researchers, theorists, and practitioners. The Project represents staff development at its very best.

Like portfolio assessment itself the Project Monograph represents a professional journey. It is authentic, ongoing and collaborative. The document reflects the high quality thinking and performance of the educators involved and makes a major professional contribution to our thinking about student assessment.

Dorsey Hammond
Oakland University
Rochester, Michigan



Foreword

A signpost on our journey to better assessment

THE MACOMB PORTFOLIO PROJECT began in 1990 as a long term project to develop and implement portfolio assessment in elementary schools.

In this project, the development of portfolios hinges on the concept of teacher as researcher and our profession as a community of learners. The concept and practice of teacher as researcher honors the right that teachers should claim to use the rich "laboratory" of their classroom to learn about children and learning.

One definition of research is to learn deliberately. This means taking risks and learning from our failures as well as our successes. If teachers are to be researchers, they must take time to reflect on their practice. This process is enhanced by collaboration with one's peers—fellow teacher/ researchers. The design of the Macomb Portfolio Project began with these two concepts, teacher as researcher and collaboration with peers, as the foundation of our work.

During the first year of the project, 1990-1991, fifty-six participants representing elementary schools from 14 Macomb County school districts volunteered to be part of this project.

Each building-level team is composed of one lower and one upper elementary teacher and the building principal. The teams meet together for staff development and planning and sharing activities. Each team is coached and supported by a local reading consultant who is simultaneously a member of a county-wide reading specialist committee overseeing the project activities.

In the third year of the project (1992-1993), the goal is to expand portfolio use at the site of each building team.

Portfolio project teachers have discovered that portfolio assessment results in changes in teaching style and structure; requires time spent in reading, researching, staff development, and staff sharing. These teachers have also found a renewed focus on positive student performance and credible proof of what they have felt intuitively about student performance.

To those who will use this booklet:

This booklet is a collaborative effort of those who participated in the Macomb Portfolio Project. It is intended to provide an overview of our findings and to serve as a guide to researching the use of portfolios in your classroom.

You will note that many of the most important portfolio concepts are repeated from one section to another. We have found that we seldom learned these concepts as isolated ideas. Rather, there is a constant interplay between the "why" of portfolios and the "what" that makes them work.

It may be helpful to view this document as a primer on portfolios. To continue your portfolio journey, you will need to read (see our bibliography) and clarify terms (see our glossary). But most of all, seek out a partner to work with you. Hopefully you'll find one with experience! If not, don't worry, experience is not required. There is not a single model portfolio, correct against all others. Rather, there are many models and many interpretations of each. We invite you to join us on our journey as we discover ways to incorporate portfolios into an authentic assessment of student achievement.

Note: Section 104 of the 1991-92 Michigan School Aid Act requires schools to provide and maintain portfolios for all secondary students. This booklet describes the work and findings of elementary teachers as they explored the use of portfolios in literacy assessment at the elementary level. This project is driven by the initiative and enthusiasm of the project participants. It is not to be confused with efforts related to Section 104.

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Sit Beside Me...

A changing view of literacy, learning, teaching and assessment

Never before in our history have American students experienced so many tests, frequently involving high stakes—endorsed diplomas, college entrance, advanced placement, etc. Besides national and state level tests, most reading programs have testing components which parallel the style and format of the large scale tests.

But, most tests are episodes separated in time and in form from the instructional process and are at best, indirect measures of progress toward the outcomes we set for our students. The overreliance on standardized testing has created an out-of-balance assessment picture.

As a reaction to this trend many educators have begun taking a look at portfolio assessment as a viable way to restore a balance toward assessment that is authentic and instruction that is geared toward the individual student rather than a set of test objectives.

Portfolio assessment is a national movement, ranging in scope from Vermont's statewide portfolio assessment procedures to individual school district efforts like those undertaken by the San Juan Unified School District in California. At the heart of this movement is a fundamental change in the way we, as educators define assessment of student progress. Understanding this change, starts with a contrast between the basic concepts implied by the words "test" and "assess." The contrast is clear when one examines their Latin roots:

test from the Latin word *testum*, meaning an earthen vessel for **measuring the purity** of metals.

assess from the Latin word *assessum*, meaning to **sit beside**.

To "measure the purity" of a student's knowledge fits well with the role of teacher as mere deliverer of instruction. Those students who "get it" are labeled pure, those who don't, are less than pure. End of unit, let's move on toward the next testing episode.

To "sit beside" changes a teacher's perspective about the role of teacher. When we "sit beside" students to assess their progress we transcend the role of deliverer of instruction to become a guide, a coach and a mentor.

The role of student changes too. They cannot get by as passive receivers of information and "right answer" responders. To "sit beside" the teacher, students must learn to set goals, produce examples of learning toward those goals and evaluate the quality and growth in their work.

The tactics and methods of portfolio assessment require a high degree of professional knowledge, skills, and flexibility. Through trial and error, reflection and observation, teachers using portfolios continually learn about their students and how to demonstrate their students' learning. But one cannot make a change toward portfolio assessment without also making instructional changes and changes in classroom "ambiance." Portfolios will be, after all, only mirrors of our classrooms.

Portfolio development is not a simple package that can be "bolted on" to the things already going on in the classroom. It is a complex process, requiring thoughtful research by teachers who are concerned first for children, knowledgeable in their craft and willing to live with ambiguity.

In this document, we will try to give you a foundation upon which to build your understanding of portfolio assessment philosophy and practice.

Understanding Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio Definition

The complexity of a portfolio makes it difficult to define. We must be careful not to oversimplify it. Often it is easier to define something by what it is not. A portfolio is not a CA-60. It is not a "Friday folder." To us in the Macomb project, a portfolio is as it's defined below, a definition that we owe, in large part, to Linda Vavrus of the Stanford University:

> ***A portfolio is a purposeful collection of evidence used by a teacher and a student to monitor growth of the student's knowledge, skills, and attitudes in literacy.***

Several key concepts emerge in this definition.

- **Purposeful** means a portfolio has direction and exists for well-defined reasons. These may be to show best work, document progress, evaluate performances, or all of the above. Other purposes will surely develop.
- **Evidence** is another key term. This means more than teacher commentary on checklists. Tangible student products which serve as evidence of process achievement also are essential. The definition identifies both teacher and student as involved in gathering evidence. This concept alone represents a major shift in assessment responsibility from that in most traditional classrooms.
- And finally, **growth** is monitored by portfolios. Its purpose is not to identify weaknesses, or rank a student against others. Like parents who use a yardstick to measure children's growth on a wall, portfolios measure the growth of a student's skills, knowledge and attitudes.

This definition has its basis in several assumptions about assessment. What follows is an explanation of these important assumptions.

1. **Portfolio assessment measures student performance traditional tests cannot.** Paper and pencil, multiple-choice tests are limited in what and how they can measure. Abilities and skills captured by portfolios help provide a more complete picture of student growth.
2. **Teachers are instructional decision-makers.** Portfolio assessment provides information, above and beyond traditional test results, which helps teachers make important decisions. Direct assessment methods, such as portfolios, improve instruction.
3. **Students are participants in the planning and self-assessment of their own learning.** Portfolios place students in the center of the assessment picture. Portfolios give students shared responsibility for learning and assessment.

"Tests are snapshots, while portfolios are more like a video."

4. **Portfolio assessment is an ongoing process.** Portfolio assessment is continuous, while tests are events separated frequently by long periods of time. Tests are snapshots, while portfolios are more like a video.
5. **Portfolio assessment focuses on authentic performances.** Tests tend to be very artificial events, while portfolios are guided by expert "real life" performances which serve as models.

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Understanding Portfolio Assessment
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6. **Portfolio assessment is often hard to separate from instruction.** Tests are seen as separate from instruction while portfolios tend to treat assessment as instruction.
7. **The process of learning is as important to assess as the product.** Tests focus on the **answer**, most often expressed as a score. Portfolios recognize the equal importance of process as in understanding and using all the strategic processes used by effective readers and writers.
8. **Portfolio assessment promotes the growth of all children.** Tests, especially norm-referenced tests, tend to be used to sort children into winners and losers, while portfolios focus on growth of the individual.
9. **Portfolio assessment has evolved with our new understandings of students and changing world demands.** Recent research emphasizes the need for students to be more active in the educational process. Portfolios move students in this direction. Changing world demands are pressing upon schools the need for students who can reason and work cooperatively with others, not just recall facts and work alone. As curriculum moves in new directions, new assessments, as in portfolios, are necessary.

TEST	PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT
Indirect	Direct
Event	Ongoing
Separate from instruction	Assessment as instruction
Product focus	Process and product
Artificial	Authentic
Primarily passive student role	Student in active role

This quick chart shows some of the fundamental differences between using tests and portfolios to assess student progress.

Key Portfolio Characteristics

Effective portfolios have common elements

As you will read over and over again in this document, there is no one perfect way to "do" portfolios. There are, however, key characteristics that effective portfolios share.

If we continually refer to these key characteristics, we can better ensure that our portfolios are, in fact, portfolios. These keys are summed up by the following eight ways:

1. **Portfolios are goal based.**
   The goals clearly are articulated. They reflect building, district and state outcomes. Both the teacher and the student can articulate them.
2. **Portfolios are authentic.**
   The entries represent "real life" tasks. Example: a letter to a member of congress versus a worksheet on punctuating a letter. Entries represent an accurate picture of instruction. Writing samples have real purposes and audiences, and evolve naturally from classroom experiences.
3. **Portfolios are selective.**
   Baseline data are collected and captioned. Selected items are closely aligned with the identified goals/outcomes for the portfolios. The classroom provides enough authentic practice in relation to these goals so that there are enough samples from which to select.
4. **Portfolios are continuous and ongoing.**
   The portfolios reflect progress over time. The teacher and student visit the portfolio regularly for the purpose of conferencing. Entries are made regularly.
5. **Portfolios are reflective.**
   Learners' reflections are respected. The learners recognize the value of reflection. Reflection has become part of the classroom process, as learners ask: What is good about my work? What should my goals be? Reflection is modeled by the teacher in a variety of contexts.
6. **Portfolios are multidimensional.**
   A wide variety of products, processes and curricular areas are sampled. Non-paper/pencil tasks (projects, observations, tapes, photos, etc.) have a place in portfolios. Learner suggestions for items to be included are respected.

"...there is no one perfect way to 'do' portfolios. There are however, key characteristics that effective portfolios share."

7. **Portfolios are collaborative.**
   The emerging world values collaboration as well as competition. Students and teachers work together, through direct and personal dialogue to assess the portfolio contents, set goals and make decisions. Teachers model for students how collaboration works and give students free access to their portfolios.
8. **Portfolios focus on strengths.**
   Portfolios show student self-evaluation and progress. They focus on each student's best efforts rather than emphasize what the student cannot do.

Portfolio Assessment Benefits

Teachers, students and parents gain new perspectives

Student Benefits

The evaluation plan for the Macomb Portfolio Project has helped us identify the benefits of portfolios for students, teachers, and parents. We describe these benefits here, realizing that we will uncover more benefits in the future. We begin with a look at the following benefits for students.

- Learning to self-assess
- Identifying growth
- Developing pride in their work
- Learning collaboration skills

By focusing on growth, portfolios open the door to other benefits. By teaching students that portfolios record how they get better, students see that self-assessment is not a fearful activity. For the first time, students may "see" their growth and therefore, appreciate the fruits of their learning.

The focus on growth with portfolios paves the way for increased student ownership of their work and motivation to learn. Because portfolios involve student reflection on the quality of their work, students learn the responsibility of setting goals for improvement and achieving those goals.

Student **pride in their work** has been the most frequently identified benefit for students in the Macomb Portfolio Project. Students from today's schools have inherited the tradition of being, for the most part, dependent upon others for evaluation of their progress. The redesigning of assessment includes asking the question, "Isn't the ultimate goal of assessment, self-assessment?"

Students frequently ask teachers such questions as, "Is this all right?", "How did I do?", "Is this what you want?" By collaborating with teachers to reflect on the quality of their work, by setting goals for improvement, and by determining what they have achieved, students prepare for a world where collaboration and self-monitoring are as important as competition or outside evaluation.

What follows are some comments made by students about their portfolios. These are students of teachers from the Macomb Portfolio Project. The students, for the most part, have only experienced portfolios with their teacher (who is in the project) as most schools have yet to use portfolios on a school-wide basis. Their remarks reflect some of the promise portfolios hold for you and your students.

4th grade reflections:

Someone else may have a better piece of work than yours, but you don't have to worry because that one piece of work is a piece of your best and you don't care if theirs is better. You don't have to worry as long as it is an example of your best work.

—Nathaniel

You can see the improvement in your work and you can also set goals and try to reach them.

—Jamie

It (the portfolio) is important to me because I like to look at all of the good things I have in my portfolio and so I can share my good work with other people.

—Noah

I think it (a portfolio) is good because you can build confidence in yourself.

—Amanda

The best thing about a portfolio that I think is you can compare what you accomplished in the beginning of the year and the end of the year.

—Tony

The best thing about a portfolio is you can see how your best work gets better.

—Jeremiah

From Brenda Clark's 4th graders,
Atwood Elementary, L'Anse Creuse.

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Portfolio Assessment Benefits
(continued)

5th Grade reflections:

You understand your work better than anyone else.
—David

(After reviewing portfolio contents)... Clearly, clearly the quality of my writing has skyrocketed.
—Nicole

Portfolios show you how you grow.
—Michael

If you don't know what you've done, you don't know how to improve.
—Lindsay

Portfolios make you feel like someone cares about and appreciates your opinion.
—Stephen

From, Mary Cass' 5th grade class,
Avalon Elementary, South Lake.

Teacher Benefits

Since we have emphasized that portfolios are driven by goals or student outcomes, teachers have most often pointed to more focused teaching as the most important benefit to teachers. The following benefits have been the first to emerge. As we grow in the application of portfolios, other benefits will follow.

- Increased knowledge of students
- Improved and more focused instruction
- Increased awareness of student progress

By keeping portfolios goals small in number, teachers were able to monitor progress and focus instruction more efficiently. Tracking too many goals is difficult to manage and interferes with improving and focusing instruction Priorities must be set and then portfolios built around these priorities.

Knowing students better results from working collaboratively with students to document their growth. Collecting evidence over a long period of time (as opposed to testing events) helps teachers see student growth as never before. Through portfolios, teachers develop a more complete picture of student progress. Instruction improves as teachers have more information about students' strengths and needs.

What follows are some reflections of project teachers on the benefits of portfolios for them.

Portfolios are an instant recognition of a child's progress. There is no need to average grades.

Portfolios teach the child to evaluate his work, and isn't this what we as teachers want to accomplish, to have each child strive to do the best that he is able?

Your teaching will improve when you use portfolios. You will get to understand each child more thoroughly.

"Instruction improves as teachers have more information about students' strength and needs."

Using portfolios has helped me be more purposeful in my instruction...the added dimension has helped increase my awareness of student involvement in their learning.

Portfolios have helped me home in on what's truly valuable for my students. We're working on the important stuff now.

My expectations have changed, both for my students and myself. I'm beginning to understand more about how children learn.

—Teacher/participants in the Macomb Portfolio Project.

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Portfolio Assessment Benefits
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Parent Benefits

Some of the most dramatic benefits in the project have been parent benefits. Numerous parents were moved upon reviewing their child's portfolio. The reasons for this follow.

- Ability to "see" progress and achievement.
- Appreciation of their children's strengths.

Parents may tend to focus on their children's weaknesses during parent-teacher conferences. Schools sometimes reinforce that tendency. Portfolios break with tradition by emphasizing student growth and strengths. Parents, often for the first time, learn to see and appreciate skills and learning their child has aquired.

Almost universally, parents are impressed with how portfolios show them the progress their children have made. They see evidence and documentation, as opposed to scores or verbal descriptions. This has been especially true for parents of special education children who may have had few opportunities to see evidence of learning from their children. What follows are some parent comments about their impressions of portfolios.

It (the portfolio) really shows the progress from the beginning of the year and it helps to actually see it than to just talk about it.

It illustrated the areas which the teacher evaluated the student on which led to greater understanding on my part.

I liked best being able to measure the growth from September until now. It's so impressive to have the proof in front of you.

Comments from parents of 1st graders in the classes of Elizabeth Sassi and Karen Wood, Atwood Elementary, L'Anse Creuse

Parents, often for the first time, learn to see and appreciate skills and learning their child has acquired.

My daughter beamed when we talked about her work.

Dave has a lot of pride in his accomplishments and is eager to share his thoughts.

My daughter seemed to have pride in her portfolio and the work inside. Whenever you can teach someone to take pride in their actions or work, you are teaching them to be responsible. This will affect the rest of her life.

Portfolios allow the child to play a more interactive role in his or her education.

Comments from parents of 5th graders of Mary Cass, Avalon Elementary, South Lake.

Getting Started

Questions to ask, and steps to take.

"The teacher as researcher movement is also a call to the profession to become a community of learners."

–Jerome Harste

Starting Together

For many, portfolio assessment is a natural extension of classroom practice. For others, it may require an uneasy paradigm shift. Both groups are to be applauded for their efforts! In either case, the portfolio path is always wide enough for more than one, and a journey down it is best made with a colleague, a trusted friend, a buddy.

If you are working without the benefit of a building-level project, choose one colleague with whom you can collaborate, meet regularly to discuss successes and problems, and share professional reading. The buddy system helps develop the trust necessary for innovation and change to take place.

In the portfolio process we value student reflection and collaboration. Teachers are learners, too, particularly teacher-researchers. Time to reflect, question and share ideas is equally valuable for them. The research of Bruce Joyce clearly indicates that for real and lasting change to occur, "coaching for application" is necessary. Coaching requires a minimum of two individuals. Find someone to explore and experiment with!

Planning for Portfolio Use

The work of Linda Vavrus at the Stanford University has contributed greatly to our understanding of portfolio assessment. As with any innovative program, there are a series of planning steps that need to be considered during the early stages of adoption.

We are indebted to Linda for framing the following series of questions which will help guide you in your identification of goals and in completing the tasks necessary to get started. These questions will help you plan for portfolios in the curriculum area of your choice.

Note: You don't need to answer all of these questions to get started! You need goals, a date stamp for dating entries, folders and a place to store them, and a clear sense of purpose for your portfolios.

1. What kinds of assessments are currently used to assess student growth and performance in this curriculum area? What do these assessments tell you learn about students' learning?
2. In this area and given your instructional program, what important aspects of student learning and performance are not being satisfactorily assessed with current practices? (Make a list of these aspects.)
3. What are building goals for what you expect students to know and be able to do in this area when they leave your building?
4. What are your grade level curricular goals? (Each grade level should focus on different elements of the building goals.)

Now... Thinking about your classroom instructional program, decide on two or three goals for student learning for which you want to plan a portfolio. These goals would be the same for all students. Later, goals tailored for each student may be added. Prepare goal statements for what student should learn or perform (be able to do).

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Getting Started
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5. How is student accomplishment of this goal currently being assessed?

Now...given your stated classroom goals, develop a documentation plan:

6. What will be the purpose of the portfolio?
7. How can you find out what students know and what they can do? In other words, what documents (work samples, formal and informal tests, observation records, interviews, surveys, etc.) might be included that would provide assessment information about the student relative to each goal?
8. What expectations do you have for students to demonstrate successful growth and/or learning related to each of your goals? How will the performances be evaluated (standards and criteria)?
9. Outline a plan for your initial assessment for each goal. Can some evidence you collect address more than one goal? You are gathering baseline data at this point.

Now... think about and develop a way to report the results of your initial assessment in a student's portfolio, showing for each goal how you will incorporate your findings into your instruction.

10. What kind of documentation to monitor student growth can be generated as part of on-going instructional activities during the year related to each goal area? How often during the year would these documents be selected/obtained to put in the portfolio? (Develop an evidence collection/selection time line for each goal.)
11. Who (teacher or student) will make selections and prepare reflective captions about what a particular document shows related to your goals?

Other Considerations:

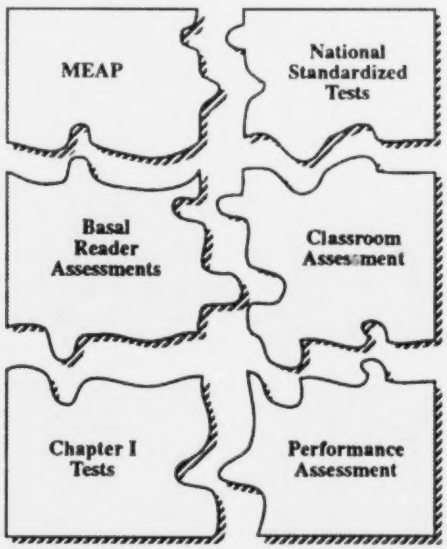
12. How will you, the teacher, use the student portfolio?
13. How will the student be involved in portfolio development? Use the portfolio? Why would it be valuable to him/her?
14. What would be other important audiences for the portfolio? What will the portfolio communicate to others? When?
15. Develop a plan for scheduling time to caption documents and to meet with your colleagues to talk about your progress.
16. If you are working as part of a building team, decide what will happen to the portfolio at the end of the school year. What would be included in a portfolio to pass on (a collaborative decision)?
17. What role should your principal play in helping you with the portfolio development process?
18. What are specific problems you will have to overcome to implement portfolios successfully as part of your assessment program? For each, how might it be solved?

Beginning a Building Assessment Plan

We suggest that portfolios can be used as part of a building/district plan for assessment.

To correct an imbalance of too much testing and not enough assessment, portfolios are seen as an equal and necessary partner in a school evaluation plan.

The Building Assessment Plan



So, portfolio assessment is not an add-on. It means a restructuring of classroom assessment as well as instruction. Evaluation measures which test outdated objectives or no longer adequately show student progress need to be abandoned. Otherwise, teachers are caught between two different curriculum and testing worlds.

Portfolio assessment, then, is one piece of a building's assessment puzzle. Each piece has a role to play, but all pieces exist to serve students, to plan effective instruction. A building's assessment plan:

- is balanced, including all forms of assessment
- includes portfolio assessment as one form
- honors teachers' judgment of student progress

So check with your principal and other teachers on how portfolios will be part of your building's evaluation plan.

About Report Cards

Ultimately, after successful use of portfolios, teachers begin to raise questions about the "fit" between outcomes evaluated by their portfolios and outcomes implied by existing report cards. Often the two don't fit and teachers feel a need to change the report cards (and even how report cards are explained to parents). This is a real test of whether or not portfolio assessment is an equal partner in a building's assessment plan.

What's Next?

No one has a road map for what might come next. We do know there are no "model" portfolios one can just copy. Teachers, students, goals and experiences are simply too varied to propose one model fits all.

Building-wide portfolio use is very rare. We are creating the road and its direction as we walk it. We are not yet sure where it will lead.

One thing is certain: Teachers have a strong hand in the development of portfolios, and a real opportunity to recapture their place in evaluating student progress.

Documenting Learner Growth

Tracking Progress in New Ways

Just as there is no single formula for portfolio development, there is no single, prescribed method for documenting learner performance. There are, however, possibilities to consider.

Dr. Doris Roettger* has devised the concise chart, "Ways to Document Student Growth," which follows this section as Figure 1. You will find it extremely helpful in defining the four options she suggests, their respective purposes and what to include in each.

> ***"Evaluation provides the most significant information if it occurs continuously and simultaneously with the experiences in which the learning is taking place."***
>
> ***(Goodman, 1985, p10).***

Two of Dr. Roettger's options, anecdotal records and captions, seem to prompt questions from teachers. Due to their value as well as to the questions surrounding them, additional information is included about both methods of documentation.

Anecdotal records offer a means of documenting student performance on a continuous basis. Notations are made about what the learner does (products), and how does he process, based on teacher observation. They are a powerful tool, frequently used by teacher/researchers.

Guidelines for the Content of Anecdotal Records

Roettger** suggests that in creating anecdotal records, one must make certain the documentation works to :

- Describe a specific event or product.
- Report, rather than evaluate or interpret.
- Relate the material to other facts that are known about the child.

Why are anecdotal notes important?

Anecdotal notes address the collaborative component of portfolios and may be used:

- during portfolio conferences with learners
- to respond to learner products, such as pieces of writing
- to make comments on captions
- as part of periodic evaluation, including comments on a portfolio summary sheet.

For some helpful reading on anecdotal record-keeping, check the following:

Goodman, Yetta, 1985, *Kidwatching*, In A. Jagger and M.T. Burke, Observing the Language Learner, Newark:I.R.A.

Rhodes and Nathenson-Mejia, 1992, *Anecdotal Records, a Powerful Tool for Ongoing Literacy Assessment*, Reading Teacher, 45 (7), pp 502-509.

Captions...What are they?

Doris Roettger describes a caption as a brief, written statement that accompanies a document or a piece of student work. An important aspect of a caption is its purpose, which Roettger says provides the person reviewing the portfolio with important information. This information includes what the document is intended to show and it's implication for instruction. (See two examples in the sample captions page that follow as Figure 2.)

(continued on next page)

* *1992 Conference Handout materials*
** *1988 Workshop Handout Materials*

Documenting Learner Growth
(continued)

Commonly Asked Questions About Captions

Is there only one way to caption?
No. Please examine the possibilities included. You will discover diversity.

Is there a right way to caption?
Yes, thoughtfully and meaningfully.

Is there a wrong way to caption?
Yes, thoughtlessly and meaninglessly.

Must all portfolio items be captioned?
No.

Why are captions important?
Along with reflection, captions help set portfolios apart from other forms of assessment. Captions are needed if we are going to synthesize, interpret and summarize the portfolio contents.

In addition, Linda Vavrus has proposed that captions are important because they:

- Help teachers monitor their own development.
- Help jog the memory of important growth-inducing events as the year progresses.
- Allow outsiders—colleagues, administrators—to interpret and make sense of why a document is in the portfolio.
- Make decision-making explicit...shows your mental note taking.
- Provide the threads or glue that makes a "collection of stuff" a portfolio.
- Create a device for monitoring growth between old and new documents.

Captions and anecdotal records are among the most complete and useful methods of documenting learner growth. There are, however, other recording methods that can be used in the process as well.

Reflective Logs and Checklists

Student reflective logs are a way for students to document their own growth. Journals or logbooks are commonly used. Young children may need to dictate their reflections or record them on tape. The logs are kept in the student's portfolio. Entries are short and can become a daily event. Children will need instruction on how to reflect and self-assess (See the section "Reflecting on Portfolios"). When a student and a teacher "visit" the portfolio, in a conference, reflective logs are a good place to determine progress in self-assessment. Since this is a major purpose for portfolios, reflective logs are a key to assessing student growth in self-assessment.

Checklists are lists of student behaviors teachers use to assess student progress. They are many and varied. Teachers are probably more familiar with checklists than with the other documenting methods we have discussed. For assessment purposes, however, there is inherent danger in using checklists. Teachers must be cautioned to use the checklist only as a guide to the portfolio and a tool for communication. The checklist must not become the assessment device, substituting check-offs for a collection of real evidence of student growth within the portfolio.

A well designed checklist clearly identifies the desired student outcomes or behaviors. These should not be kept secret but should be shared with students so they clearly understand the outcomes toward which they are working.

Finally, in considering your methods for documentation, remember, that portfolios are goal or outcome directed. This helps everyone focus the documentation and prevents a portfolio from becoming a catch-all folder.

Ways to Document Learner Growth in Portfolios

	CAPTIONS	ANECDOTAL RECORDS	STUDENT REFLECTIVE LOGS	CHECKLISTS
Description	■ A brief, written statement that accompanies a document or a piece of student work.	■ A factual description of what a student has done.	■ Periodic writing by students, read by the teacher. Length of writing tends to be about a paragraph.	■ List of activities, behaviors or steps that the observer records when monitoring student performance.
Purpose	■ Provides person reviewing the portfolio with enough information on each piece to interpret what the document is intended to show. ■ Informs instruction.	■ Documents the process student is using or has used (as opposed to the product). ■ Informs instruction.	■ Informs instruction.	■ Collecting diagnostic data. ■ Formative or summative evaluation. ■ May be single event or accumulated over time.
What to include	■ Purpose of the assignment or activity — what the students were to do and why. ■ What the student did in relation to the assignment. ■ What you can say about what the student did.	■ Factual description of what a student is doing in relation to instruction and the assignment.	■ Students describe what they felt about what they learned. ■ Students also document questions they have or things they don't understand.	■ Checklist items which are clear and precise statements relating to a given goal. ■ Items that are understandable by parents, teachers and students to facilitate discussion.

Figure 1.

Sample Captioning Forms

Name
Date

GENRE: **informative/expressive**

SAMPLE: character study (initial sample)

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND: Learners had been focusing on characters for about a week in both Independent Reading and Writing Workshop mini-lessons. Learners were directed to write about any character they had been reading about and to tell what they knew about the character including identification of character and book title, physical and character descriptions, text references and personal reactions. They were also advised to show what they knew about polishing (revision and editing).

PURPOSE: To provide an initial sample of character study; to demonstrate comprehension (literal and inferential); to demonstrate growth in writing (content and conventions).

INTERPRETATION: This sample demonstrates the learner's ability to:

1. Recall details
2. Make inferences
3. Cite references
4. Express personal intrepretations/opinions
5. Polish writing
6. Practice language conventions

LEARNER'S SELF-ASSESSMENT: I CHOSE THIS AS MY BEST CHARACTER STUDY BECAUSE I USED A LOT OF TEXT REFERENCES, IT WAS NEAT, AND I POLISHED IT A LOT AND FOUND LOTS OF DETAIL. NOW, I'D LIKE TO MAKE MORE CONNECTIONS. Mike

Name
Date

GENRE: **expository**

SAMPLE: summary of surveys reflecting public opinion on nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND: Learners studied the Clarence Thomas nomination based on notes taken from the news, a newspaper article that was read in class discussions. Learners conducted local surveys to get a sense of public opinion n this issue. Results were tallied and discussed. Summaries were briefly described (expository writing that briefly relates who, what, where, when, why, how) and learners wrote them.

PURPOSE: Provide initial assessment of summary writing.

INTERPRETATION: This sample should demonstrate the learner's ability to

1. Include critical elements of expository text
2. Write a summary
3. Revise and edit

LEARNER'S SELF-ASSESSMENT

WHAT I LEARNED: I learned better ways to close up my summary.

MY FUTURE GOALS: To put more specific details into my summary.

Nicole ☺

Figure 2.

Here are two examples of caption sheets used by a fifth grade teacher for specific writing projects. The teacher's explanation and the learner's reflections give a clear summary of the intent of the exercise.

Reflecting on Portfolios

In the foreword to this booklet, we introduced the concept of an expanded teacher role—specifically, through portfolio use, teachers become researchers. To fully enter this new role requires us to reflect on both portfolio content and process. In fact, reflection is a key process which distinguishes portfolios from other forms of assessment.

Why should teachers and students take time to reflect on the content and process of portfolios? Reflection requires us to analyze our thinking (a meta-cognitive exercise) to continually bring both the learner and the teacher back to the fundamentals of portfolio development.

The teacher/researcher is:

- ***An observer***
- ***A questioner***
- ***A learner***
- ***A more competent teacher***

The process of reflection can begin by teachers asking the right questions. Here are just some examples for starters:

- *How am I doing in regard to our portfolio fundamentals?*
- *Am I selecting items based on goals?*
- *Am I accommodating the needs to be collaborative and reflective?*
- *Am I being flexible enough to modify our portfolio plan if student needs have changed?*
- *What am I learning?*
- *What do I need to know more about?*
- *What do my portfolios tell me about past and future instruction?*

Some questions for reflection for students:

- *Do they understand the purpose of these portfolios?*
- *Can they justify each selection in their portfolio?*
- *Can they identify how they've grown and new goals they need to set?*
- *What is their progress in self-assessment?*

Results of reflection from all those involved should provide strong implications for subsequent instruction. Thus, assessment drives instruction drives assessment...

Questions Portfolio Practitioners Ask About Reflection:

Who is involved in reflecting? What are the unique outcomes of the reflections of different groups?

I. Learners

- Compare performance to identified outcomes/ goals and the performance of peers.
- Chart progress.
- Develop higher order thinking.
- Increase ownership for learning.

"The ultimate purpose of evaluation is to enable students to evaluate themselves."

(Costa, 1989)

(continued on next page)

Reflecting on Portfolios
(continued)

II. Parents

- Compare their child's performance to identified outcomes/goals.
- Respond to their child's performance with encouragement.
- Be actively involved in their child's learning.
- Suggest goals for their child's consideration.
- Provide feedback about their child's performance and the portfolio process.

III. Teachers

- Compare the learner's performance to identified outcomes/goals and evaluate that performance
- Chart the learner's progress.
- Plan and modify instruction.
- Suggest goals for the learner's consideration.
- Assess the portfolio process, modifying outcomes and procedures as needed.

IV. Teacher's colleagues

- Provide feedback about the portfolio process.
- Provide support.
- Encourage real and lasting change to occur.

How do we teach reflection?

- Model reflection with think-alouds and written samples by asking key questions. (See Key Questions Box below)
- Provide frequent authentic practice
- Validate reflection with response (discussion, captions, written comments)
- Discuss the learner benefits of reflection.

Key Questions for Reflection

1. What worked well today and why?

2. What needs more work and why?

3. What did I learn today?

4. What should be my goal for next time and why?

When do we reflect?

Weave reflection (self-assessment) into daily classroom experiences.

Schedule regular, periodic visits to the portfolio.

Schedule periodic conferences that involve learners, teachers and parents.

Some other thoughts on reflection

Regarding reading comprehension, W. Dorsey Hammond reminds us, "There are fundamental strategies teachers must use. We don't have to be fancy." Likewise with reflection. Keep it simple.

By making portfolios readily accessible to learners, you create opportunities for reflection, and you promote student ownership of their portfolios.

The June Dilemma: "What Do I Do with Them Now?"

Teachers in the Macomb Project have faced a dilemma at the end of each year of the project. Most often, the next year's teacher is not using portfolios and may not value them. The most common option is to give the portfolio to the student to take home. If you are beginning to use portfolios, and find yourself in the minority in your building, you too will face the "June Dilemma."

If your entire school staff is not using portfolios, you probably will need to work out, on a year-by-year, teacher-by teacher basis, whether to pass on the portfolios or not. As we have suggested for other portfolio issues, involving your students in this decision is important.

Ideally, portfolios follow students throughout their school career as part of the school's evaluation plan (see earlier section: A Building Evaluation Plan). Some project sites are using portfolios on a building-wide basis. The dilemma in these buildings is not what to do with portfolios, but exactly what and how much is sent on to the next teacher. The form portfolios take when being passed on is really a building staff decision. Here are some things Macomb project teachers have found helpful to include:

1. **Goals** stated within the portfolio.
2. At least two or three **dated samples** of student work for each goal. (This allows comparison of growth over time.)
3. Teacher and student **written comments**.
4. End-of-year **teacher reflection paragraph** noting student growth and needs.
5. End-of-year **student reflection paragraph** noting student growth, needs, and what the student wants to work on next year.

Your school can determine what will be important to include for your portfolios.

How portfolios are passed on to the next school also needs to be addressed. They are too important to have this transfer be mishandled. As in a relay race, a smooth exchange of the baton is essential.

A Teacher's Portfolio

Donald Graves urges teachers who use portfolios with their students to keep their own personal portfolio for literacy. (Donald Graves and Bonnie Sunstein, Portfolio Portraits, Heinemann, 1992) He believes we need to know portfolios "from the inside." Perhaps another way to say this is we need to be able to "walk our talk." Our decisions about student portfolios will be enhanced by our experiences in keeping our own portfolios. As with student portfolios, you will need to identify the purposes, goals and audiences for your portfolio. If your goals center on literacy, will your portfolio include: Photos?, Video- or audiotapes? Lists of books read? Your own published or unpublished writing? A Journal? News articles? Recipes? Short stories?

Think about the influence on your children when you share your portfolio with individuals or the class as a whole.

Think of what you may discover about yourself and new directions you may take. Talk with other teachers too, and share your personal portfolios with one another.

Good Luck!

Questions Teachers Ask About Portfolios

Beginning any new venture can be exciting but it can be a stressful experience as well. There are many questions to be answered. Most Macomb Portfolio Project participants came to the project with more questions than answers. Here are some of the most frequent concerns expressed by teachers about portfolio assessment, and the answers we have found so far:

1. Why should I use portfolios?

There are many benefits to portfolios, benefits for students, teachers and parents (see the "Benefits" section of this document). Students learn pride in their work and how to self-assess. Teachers learn how to document student growth in ways tests cannot. And parents can "see" their child's growth and achievement, often for the first time. But, we don't believe teachers must use portfolios. Teachers need to know all the alternatives available to them and choose assessments that meet their needs.

2. Who has control over the portfolio, the student or the teacher?

Portfolio advocates are spread along a continuum of little to a lot of student control. Most advocates suggest that students have a significant degree of control or involvement. Our approach, however, has been to describe portfolios as a collaborative process, with teacher and student sharing responsibility for the design and management of the portfolio.

3. Rather than re-invent the wheel, isn't there a model portfolio I could adopt?

While teachers in the Macomb Project benefited from seeing other teachers' portfolios, no single model emerged. Because every teacher is different and her students are different, the portfolios will differ. What portfolios do have in common is a set of characteristics and adherence to a set of assumptions about assessment (see "Key Portfolio Characteristics" and "Understanding Portfolio Assessment" in this booklet).

4. So what, exactly, goes into a portfolio?

Portfolios are purposeful collections of student work. So what goes in depends on one's goals for the portfolios. The Macomb Project worked primarily with literacy portfolios. Some of what you would find in our portfolios (all of which are dated) might include:

- Tape recordings of a student reading different texts throughout the year
- Charts showing number of books read throughout the year
- Writing samples (both rough drafts and final products)
- Teacher comments about student work
- Student comments about their work
- Student response journals
- Written or oral retellings and on and on ...

5. Do you evaluate a portfolio? If so, how?

There is much debate about this issue and the issue has not been resolved. There are those who feel it will be difficult to evaluate portfolios between classes and across schools or districts. Some question the consistency and reliability of portfolio evaluation. Will one third grade teacher evaluate her portfolios in a way that's consistent with her third grade colleague? Others feel, with training, teachers will be able to meet the challenges of consistency and reliability.

In the end, a portfolio is evaluated in terms of whether its goals have been accomplished.

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Questions Teachers Ask About Portfolios

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6. Will portfolios take the place of report cards?

Project teachers have begun to raise this question and no one yet has fully answered it. Report cards may need to change to be aligned with portfolios. It is probably unrealistic to expect portfolios to serve as the single reporting tool to students and parents.

7. How are parents reacting to portfolios?

Enthusiastically! (See some of the parent comments in the "Benefits" section of this booklet.) The primary benefit seems to be that parents are able to see growth they had not seen before. Growth of pride in work, student responsibility, growth in writing and reading sophistication, and so on.

8. Are elementary students able to be responsible for their portfolios?

When children are putting some of their best work in their portfolios teachers get nervous. Will they damage their work or lose it? Students must be taught responsibility for their portfolios. As their pride in their portfolios grows, students take great care with them. Early elementary teachers will need to maintain greater control over the portfolio in the beginning, as children learn how to use and be responsible for them.

9. Aren't portfolios a lot of work?

Without question. Even more so if portfolios are on top of everything else you do. The project discovered that portfolios should be "in place of." By that we meant in place of practices and activities that are outmoded . This may mean taking a careful look at the use of basal reader assessments. In the beginning, as teachers are learning to use portfolios, there is more time devoted to portfolios than later, when teachers have learned more about managing them. With anything, you must ask if the results warrant the effort and time. Teachers in the project answer a resounding yes to the question of portfolios being worth the time.

Glossary of Terms

Assessment

A complex process of documenting development, nurturing understanding and reflection, as well as a moment of learning.

Authentic Assessment

The gathering of information which grows out of real-world reading, writing, and learning. Predicated on real purposes and the solving of real problems. Reflects daily classroom goals and practices. Mirrors good instruction.

Learner-Based Assessment

Approaches learning from beside the child as a fellow learner. Information collected about a child's growth and learning is collected by watching children in action, talking with and listening to children, and looking at collections of children's work.

Performance Based Assessment

Requires students to perform a task rather than simply answering questions.

Self-Assessment

A reflective process in which students assess their own learning, thinking, and products, set goals, and analyze their skills and processes. Demands that students think about what they're doing, why they're doing it, and how they can improve through the process of introspection and reflection. Puts the responsibility for learning on the student. A major goal of portfolio assessment.

Anecdotal Record

A dated, written, factual observation of what a student has done emphasizing what the child can do.

Authentic Tasks

Real-world learning tasks that provide a context for acquiring new knowledge, practicing new skills or strategies, and demonstrating learning.

Baseline Sample

The first sample of a particular type of work against which change and growth will be measured over time.

Caption

A dated, brief statement that accompanies a piece of student work. It includes teacher's purpose for assignment, criteria for accomplishment, and describes briefly what the piece tells about the student's learning. May also include student's self-reflection. Makes a portfolio more than a collection of stuff.

Collaborative

Shared ownership is achieved through a process of teacher/student negotiation which develops a learning partnership.

Criteria

Indicators of an ability or knowledge to be observed.

Expert

Someone so foolish as to claim he or she knows all there is to know about portfolio assessment.

Goals/Outcomes

What the teacher values. What students should know, be able to do, and be like.

Kid Watching

A process of evaluation done through observation, interaction, and analysis.

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Glossary of Terms
(continued)

Multidimensional
Samples a wide range of cognitive processes, affective responses, and literacy activities, i.e., interest, motivation, metacognition, knowledge, and strategies. Uses multiple indicators: teacher observation, informal records, interviews, checklists, and student's personal response.

Portfolio
A purposeful collection of evidence used by a teacher and a student to monitor growth of the student's knowledge, skills, and attitudes in literacy.

Reflective Journals and Logs
Students are asked to reflect or think about what they have read, written, learned, or contributed. Their thinking and/or feelings are summarized and recorded. Examples include Content Area Learning Logs and Reading Response Journals.

Rubric
May be as simple as a list of criteria for a performance or project, developed collaboratively by teacher and students, based on desired outcomes, teacher, and student goals. Or as complex as a scoring guide that describes degrees of mastery or quality.

Self-Reflection
Provides an opportunity for learning as students share their thoughts about the work they've done. Enables students to take responsibility for their own learning - deciding what they know, what they want to know, how well they want to know it, and how they will achieve it. A major goal of portfolio assessment.

Summary Sheet
A list of the contents of the portfolio. Serves as an organizing framework to help synthesize information.

Work Folder
A place to keep ongoing student work until selection is made for the portfolio. Contains everything a student produces in class - notes from brainstorming, drafts, logs, reflections, and final products.

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2.* **Au, K. H.**, & And Others. (1990). Assessment of Students' Ownership of Literacy (Assessment). *Reading Teacher*, *44*(2), 154-56. Discusses the concept of ownership of literacy and how ownership can be assessed. Suggests that teachers must give high priority to encouraging and assessing their students' ownership of literacy if they want them to be committed to literacy as a lifelong pursuit. (MG) (ERIC Abstract).

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4.* **Flood, J., & Lapp, D.** (1989). Reporting Reading Progress: A Comparison Portfolio for Parents. *Reading Teacher*, *42*(7), 508-14. Explains how a comparison portfolio can illustrate a student's progress by contrasting performances from the beginning and end of the school year. Notes that the portfolio should include standardized test scores, informal assessments, student writing samples, voluntary reading program reports, self assessments, and samples of class reading materials. (MM) (ERIC Abstract).

5. **Frazier, D. M., & Paulson, F. L.** (1992). How Portfolios Motivate Reluctant Writers. *Educational Leadership*, *49*(8), 62-65. An Oregon elementary teacher encouraged a group of fourth grade students in a writing pullout program to share their writings in a portfolio she was assembling for an education class. The kids all volunteered their writing, learned to express themselves better, and asked to create their own portfolios. The experience fostered student ownership, pride, and high self-esteem. (MLH) (ERIC Abstract).

6. **Goldman, J. P.** (1989). Student Portfolios Already Proven in Some Schools. *School Administrator*, *46*(11), 11. Although Vermont was the first to initiate a statewide portfolio assessment program, two other states are making progress using this approach. Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) is experimenting with portfolios kept by junior high students in music, visual arts, and writing. New York has an ambitious hands-on program to test fourth graders' science proficiency. (MLH)(ERIC Abstract).

7. **Gomez, M. L.**, & And Others. (1991). Reassessing Portfolio Assessment: Rhetoric and Reality. *Language Arts*, *68*(8) (Themed Issue: The Whys, Whats, and Hows of Literacy Evaluation), 620-28. Examines the rhetoric about portfolio assessment and compares that rhetoric with observations from one school district's project in developing portfolio assessment. Presents observations that show the successes and the remaining challenges in implementing alternative assessments. (MG) (ERIC Abstract).

8.* **Goodman, Y. M.** (1978). Kid Watching: An Alternative to Testing. *National Elementary Principal*; 57; 4; 41-5 Educators concerned with how children learn language cannot allow inadequate measures like standardized tests to interfere with students' learning experiences. The school environment must support teachers who develop the ability to observe children and who understand the dynamics of language development. (Author) (ERIC Abstract).

* Especially good for those thinking of getting started.

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10. **Hansen, J.** (1992). Literacy Portfolios: Helping Students Know Themselves. *Educational Leadership, 49*(8), 66-68. In a New Hampshire school, literacy portfolios enable students to plan a relevant curriculum for themselves. After learning what each student values, teachers seek ways to honor students' concerns and outside interests. Instead of passively awaiting the next assignment, students make their own plans and, with teacher coaching, become better writers while completing self-assigned tasks. (11 references) (MLH).(ERIC Abstract)

11.* **Harp, B.** (. (1991). *Assessment and Evaluation in Whole Language Programs.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon. Twelve chapters cover whole language assessment from many perspectives including "regular" ed, special ed, administrative concerns, and so on. Of particular note is Harp's "Principles of Assessment and Evaluation in Whole Language Classrooms."

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15. **Knight, P.** (1992). How I Use Portfolios in Mathematics. *Educational Leadership, 49*(8), 71-72. Mathematics portfolios need not be limited to problem-solving efforts. When California algebra teacher asked students what portfolio contents would show their effort and learning, they suggested daily notes, personal budget and lottery projects, scale drawing, their best and worst tests, weekly problems, daily class notes, and homework. Students graded each others' portfolios and are working on "son of portfolio." (MLH)(ERIC Abstract).

16. **Lamme, L. L., & Hysmith, C.** (1991). One School's Adventure into Portfolio Assessment. *Language Arts (The Whys, Whats, and Hows of Literacy Evaluation), 68*(8), 629-40. Reviews background information about portfolio assessment. Describes the experiences of the faculty in one school with a schoolwide portfolio assessment system. Shares struggles and solutions which may be valuable to others seeking to develop alternative assessment programs. (MG)(ERIC Abstract).

17. **Maeroff, G. I.** (1991). Assessing Alternative Assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan, 73*(4), 272-81. For all its attractiveness, alternative assessment is fraught with complications and difficulties, as Rhode Island's experience shows. Although alternative assessment can be systematic, there are no ways to rate large numbers of performance-based tasks, portfolios, interviews, exhibits, or essays. Some standardization is necessary, and assessment must be aligned with instruction. (11 references) (MLH).(ERIC Abstract)

* Especially good for those thinking of getting started.

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18.* **Mills, R. P.** (1989). Portfolios Capture Rich Array of Student Performance. *School Administrator*, *46*(11), 8-11. Responding to concerns over the lack of statewide assessment, Vermont educators, with citizen support, have decided to use portfolios of student work, beginning with writing and mathematics and expanding into other curriculum areas. Standardized tests will play an important, although secondary role. Student and teacher responsibility will increase dramatically. (MLH)(ERIC Abstract).

19. **Olson, M. W.** (1991). Portfolios: Education Tools (Research into Practice). *Reading Psychology*, *12*(1), 73-80. Considers the rationale for and some of the uses of portfolios in an educational context. Discusses assessment and teacher education uses for portfolios and offers portfolio development guidelines. (MG)(ERIC Abstract).

20. **Paris, S. G.** (1991). Portfolio Assessment for Young Readers (Assessment). *Reading Teacher*, *44*(9), 680-82. Highlights some of the promising avenues to pursue as teachers strive to create alternative literacy assessments. Argues that portfolios of literacy development offer exciting opportunities for teachers to create assessments that engage students in authentic activities and provide genuine guidance for instruction. (MG)(ERIC Abstract).

21.* **Paulson, F. L.**, & And Others. (1991). What Makes a Portfolio a Portfolio? *Educational Leadership*, *48*(5), 60-63. Defines "portfolio" as an interaction of instruction and assessment and presents guidelines for using portfolios in self-directed learning. Portfolio assessment offers students a concrete way to value their own work. A portfolio is separate from a student's cumulative folder, conveys the student's activities, may have multiple purposes, and contains information illustrating growth. (MLH)(ERIC Abstract)

22. **Pearson, H.** (1988). The Assessment of Reading through Observation. *Reading*, *22*(3), 158-63. Outlines an observational album assessment device, which describes children's reading behavior, taking into account attitudes, responses and strategies to produce a profile of each reader's achievements. (NH)(ERIC Abstract).

23.* **Pils, L. J.** (1991). Soon Anofe You Tout Me: Evaluation in a First-Grade Whole Language Classroom. *Reading Teacher*, *45*(1), 46-50. Presents a variety of literacy evaluation strategies devised and implemented by a teacher who is making the transition to whole language. (MG)(ERIC Abstract).

24. **Rief, L.** (1990). Finding the Value in Evaluation: Self-Assessment in a Middle School Classroom. *Educational Leadership*, *47*(6), 24-29. Portfolios give teachers insights into their students' growth not possible through traditional assessment measures. The portfolio concept is feasible if students become immersed in reading, writing, speaking, and listening and are given sufficient time, project choices, and positive reinforcement. Educators should nurture self-evaluation of writing and reading in progress. (MLH)(ERIC Abstract).

25. **Sunstein, B. S.** (1992) The Personal Portfolio: Redefining Literacy, Rethinking Assessment, Re-examining Evaluation. *Writing Notebook: Creative Word Processing in the Classroom*, *9*(4), 36-3. Advocates the keeping and sharing of portfolios for students and teachers alike, with portfolio keepers evaluating themselves. Discusses the instructional and evaluative opportunities portfolios offer, reflections of portfolio keepers, and how portfolios teach about teaching and learning. (SR)(ERIC Abstract).

26.* **Tierney, R. J., Carter, M., & Desai, L.** (1991). *Portfolio Assessment in Reading - Writing Classrooms*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon. A good overview of the Portfolio process, this is one of the early books on the subject.

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27.* **Valencia, S.** (1990). A Portfolio Approach to Classroom Reading Assessment: The Whys, Whats, and Hows (Assessment). *Reading Teacher*, *43*(4), 338-40. Summarizes, in four guiding principles drawn from both research and instructional practices, the theoretical and pragmatic reasons for a portfolio approach to reading assessment. (MG)(ERIC Abstract).

28. **Valencia, S.**, & And Others. (1989). Theory and Practice in Statewide Reading Assessment: Closing the Gap. *Educational Leadership*, *46*(7), 57-63. Instead of decoding sentences, good readers build meaning by integrating their knowledge with the text. Reading assessment must shift from traditional quantifiable tests to a portfolio system incorporating multiple measures and indicators of expertise. Michigan and Illinois efforts to translate interactive reading theory into assessment practices are discussed. Includes 13 references. (MLH)(ERIC Abstract).

29. **Valencia, S. W., & Calfee, R.** (1991). The Development and Use of Literacy Portfolios for Students, Classes, and Teachers. *Applied Measurement in Education*, *4*(4), 333-45. Special issue with title "Performance Assessment." Using portfolios in assessing literacy is explored, considering student portfolios and the teacher's class portfolio. Portfolio assessment is a valuable complement to externally mandated tests, but technical issues must be addressed if the portfolio movement is to survive. Portfolios must be linked to the broader task of instructional improvement. (SLD)(ERIC Abstract).

30.* **Vavrus, L.** (1990). Put Portfolios to the Test. *Instructor*, *100*(1), 48-53. Portfolio-based assessment, a collection of selected student work used for ongoing evaluation, has been identified as one of the three top curriculum trends. This article discusses practical and conceptual aspects of portfolio use, includes an interview with an expert on portfolio-based assessment, and briefly discusses state policies on portfolios. (IAH)(ERIC Abstract).

31.* **Wiggins, G.** (1989). A True Test: Toward More Authentic and Equitable Assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *70*(9), 703-13. Educators' confusion over uses of standardized tests is akin to mistaking pulse rate for the total effect of a health regimen. Using authentic standards and tests to judge intellectual ability is labor-intensive and time-consuming. What students need is a test with more sophisticated criteria for judging performance. Includes 37 references. (MLH)(ERIC Abstract).

32.* **Winograd, P.**, & And Others. (1991). Improving the Assessment of Literacy. *Reading Teacher*, *45*(2), 108-16. Provides a rationale for why literacy assessment is in need of improvement. Presents guidelines for improving literacy assessment. Describes a model for implementing changes in literacy assessment. (MG)(ERIC Abstract).

33. **Wolf, D. P.** (1989). Portfolio Assessment: Sampling Student Work. *Educational Leadership*, *46*(7), 35-39. In their search for alternatives to standardized assessment, a consortium of Pittsburgh administrators, teachers, and researchers discovered the value of portfolios gathered by artists, musicians, and writers. Now their students gather portfolios consisting of biographies of works, a range of works, and their own reflections. Includes five references. (MLH)(ERIC Abstract).

34. **Wolf, D. P.**, & And Others. (1992). Good Measure: Assessment as a Tool for Educational Reform. *Educational Leadership*, *49*(8), 8-13. Presents an interim vision of a performance assessment model for middle schools that is built on a culture of high expectations, internal accountability, and rites of passage expressed in student portfolios. Despite problems with portfolio work, all students and teachers must have ongoing experience with demanding tasks and high standards. Test scores and transcripts are severely limited reform tools. (MLH)(ERIC Abstract).

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